

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

*giving our students the world*

May 26, 2004

**Miami-Dade County School Board**

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**Superintendent of Schools**

*Merrett R. Stierheim*

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Docket Number (WT Docket No. 03-66) "Ex Parte Presentation"

Dear Chairman Powell:

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), the fourth largest school system in the nation, constructed its first two Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) channels in 1969. Since that time the Miami-Dade School Board has built on ten additional channels and joined in a consortium with other educational institutions to operate an ITFS system of twenty channels. All are currently being used to deliver video instruction to K-12 students, and the system is also used to deliver teacher continuing education programs directly to the schools. To make that possible, 339 schools have been equipped with ITFS reception equipment, school site video distribution systems and television receivers in every classroom. In addition, we have constructed studios with extensive equipment to produce and originate programming that is broadcast on our ITFS channels. The school district and state have invested millions of dollars in this system in the last 20 years.

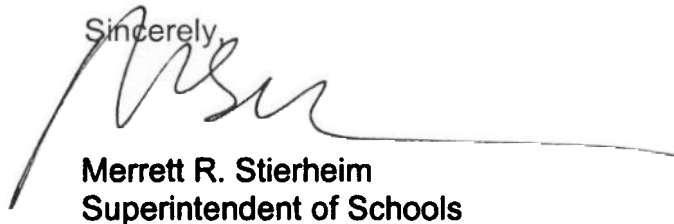
With the advent of the new non-line of sight (NLOS) technologies, our staff has been actively planning to make expanded use of ITFS to create a system-wide Wide Area Wireless Network that would serve our students and teachers, not only in classrooms, but also in other locations where they learn.

I understand that the Commission is now considering an order that would reallocate to commercial use a substantial portion of the spectrum that was allocated to the educational licensees in Miami-Dade County. If the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) were to commercialize spectrum in which M-DCPS and the state have invested so much in funds and human effort, it will

Page Two  
Letter to The Honorable Michael K. Powell

make it much more difficult for us to serve the more than 360,000 students in the district and it will also impact our ability to provide teachers with in-service training. In addition, it would limit opportunities to expand our programs in electronic learning, minimize our prospects for avoiding additional costs for leasing commercial distribution facilities, and cause our taxpayers to pay the additional costs for the ever expanding needs for the distribution of data, voice, and electronic education.

This school district and its consortium partners, Friends of WLRN, Inc. and South Florida ITV, Inc., have relied on the FCC's original allocation of these channels to build educational programs and have invested millions in limited funds available for educational technology. I urge that the Commission reject any action that does not take into account the reliance our school district has placed on the Commission's allocation to Dade County ITFS licensees. Proposals to allow any ITFS spectrum to be licensed to commercial entities, or to reduce in any respect the total amount of spectrum allocated to ITFS licensees would create serious financial impact and would severely limit our ability to use ITFS technology to educate Miami-Dade County's children and adults.

Sincerely,  
  
Merrett R. Stierheim  
Superintendent of Schools

MRS:bs  
L2225

cc: Governor Jeb Bush  
School Board Members  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein